

An Overview of Nutritional Education

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PERSPECTIVE

Nutrition education is a collection of learning experiences aimed at assisting people in making good food choices and other nutrition-related behaviours. It refers to any combination of instructional tactics accompanied by environmental supports aimed at facilitating the adoption of healthy eating habits and other food and nutrition-related behaviours. Nutrition education takes place in a variety of settings, including at the individual, community, and policy levels. Food security, food literacy, and food sustainability are all topics that Nutrition Education examines seriously. Nutritional education encourages people to eat well and exercise regularly. Nutrition educators work at colleges, universities, and schools, as well as government agencies, cooperative extension, communications and public relations firms, the food industry, volunteer and service organisations, and other trustworthy sources of nutrition and health education information. Nutrition education is a way to raise awareness and self-efficacy about the factors that lead to healthy behaviour.

The White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health recommended that nutrition education be included in school curricula in 1969. It was made possible by the Children's Nutrition Act. The USDA established the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) programme in 1978 with the goal of providing grants to state school systems to help support nutrition education programmes. The program's funding was aimed at schoolchildren, teachers, parents, and service professionals. The United States Department of Agriculture is the government department in charge of providing nutrition education and setting dietary guidelines based on current scientific knowledge. Children and low-income citizens can benefit from many of their initiatives, which provide access to food that might otherwise be inaccessible. The Food and Nutrition Service and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion are two entities within the USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services division.

The Food and Nutrition Service's main goals are to minimise the risk of obesity and ensuring that hunger is no longer a worry for Americans through its 15 federal nutrition assistance programmes. WIC, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and school meals are just a few of its services. The Obama administration's Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 included provisions that led to reforms that established minimum requirements for all food and beverages sold on school campuses.

The new guidelines set restrictions on the amount of sugar, salt, and saturated fat calories that specific foods can have per serving.

In 1944, the Public Health Service Act was passed, expanding the scope of the agency's responsibilities. The Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act (IMPACT) was proposed in the Senate in 2005 with the goal of amending the Public Health Service Act to combat childhood obesity. It requested funding for eating disorder and obesity detection, treatment, and prevention. By educating students on the aspects of a healthy diet, emphasising the consumption of lower fat dairy options and both fruits and vegetables, nutrition education programmes in schools aim to create behaviours that prevent students from becoming obese, developing diabetes and cardiovascular issues, and forming negative emotional issues. Because most children eat one to two meals at school, school-based nutrition education programmes provide students with opportunity to practise making good eating choices. However, there may be a lack of obvious intended behaviour changes due to influences outside of the school environment, such as family, cultural, and social environments.

Obesity prevalence among kids ages 2-19 climbed from 13.9 to 18.5 percent between 1999 and 2016, according to the National Center for Health Statistics' October 2017 data brief. College students' eating habits, such as skipping meals throughout the day and indulging in potentially risky self-prescribed weight loss procedures, when combined with a diet rich in sodium, cholesterol, and saturated fats, can have a significant impact on their current and future health. The average college student's diet is deficient in vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Research has shown that enrolling in a university nutrition class emphasising the consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as certain dietary habits that prevent chronic disease increased students' consumption of fruits and vegetables significantly when compared to their baseline consumption levels. Obesity in children is a public health issue.

According to recent estimates, 17 percent of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years in the United States were obese in 2011 and 2012. Environmental variables such as a decrease in physical activity and an increase in energy intake, in addition to nutrition instruction, have resulted in more sedentary youngsters. Hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and type 2 diabetes are only a few of the chronic disorders that have resulted from this rise in BMI. Obesity has increased as a result of poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity from childhood through maturity.

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Poor nutrition education has resulted from a lack of funding and resources. Due to a lack of money, schools have developed arrangements with private corporations such as soda and candy companies that enable vending machines and other products in public schools, resulting in a monopoly. Federal, regional, state,

local, and school district policies are used to implement nutrition-based policies. In nutrition education, teachers have a greater direct influence. There aren't many studies that illustrate how nutrition education initiatives effect instructors in the schools that they're supposed to affect.